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Deer Park Music Practice Studio

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Prologue

The studio is filled with a lot of musical instruments: grand piano, upright piano, digital piano, organ, accordion, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, violin, cello, acoustic guitar, drum set, xylophone, and probably some more. There also are a computer and a printer, so that you can listen to or watch music performances and download music sheets. The best part is that you can use any of these instruments and resources *for free*, as long as the studio is open and available. Of course, you need to make a reservation. You can just call or send email to the owner of the studio, known as Mr. Sid. He converted his two-car detached garage into this music practice studio. There is no sound-proofing. But since it is a separate building, there is no sound problem.

If this sounds too good. It might be. There is a catch ... for some people ... it turns out, for many people. The studio is *exclusively* for those intrinsically-motivated and self-directed. That is, Mr. Sid does not let you take any lesson or instructions in the studio. You are on your own. This reflects Mr. Sid's attitude toward learning music or, for that matter, learning anything. Of course, Mr. Sid doesn't have a say about what you do outside the studio. So, if you have taken, are taking, or will be taking music lessons elsewhere, that should not bother Mr. Sid.

Of course, most people think that lessons are *essential* for learning music. Then, would there be anyone who can take advantage of this studio? Well, it seems there are. Let's listen to the three frequent users of the studio.

Nora (piano):

I like music, especially classical music. The sound of various musical instruments are so pleasing to me. So, I occasionally go to concerts held at a local performing arts center. One evening, I was sitting in a front row, very close to the pianist. The pianist was a music student pursuing a master's degree in piano performance at a local university. She may not be the best pianist in the world. But when she played the last piece, I was so moved. Dramatic, nostalgic, and sweet. Roaring bass and singing treble. I felt that an unusual amount of energy was flowing from the pianist through the piano. And to my surprise, I really wanted to play that piece of music *myself*. It was Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2.

After the concert, I had a chance to talk to the pianist. I meekly mentioned that I wanted to learn how to play the last piece, although I had never played the piano. Then, she said, "Great! You can do it! When I started, I didn't have a teacher. Our family couldn't afford one. So, I just practiced on my own. That was back in Hungary, where I'm from." Really?! I thought.

So, with that unexpected encouragement, I started to think about it. Of course, I knew that this whole thing would be a formidable challenge. I had never really played a musical instrument. I never thought that I was talented either. So, I was just wondering for a while and never told this to anyone. I was also doubtful about learning it on my own. I couldn't eliminate my thought that I needed to take lessons. Anyway, I started to pay attention to what I can do.

One day, one of my friends told me about her daughter's piano lessons. The daughter started to take lessons when she was a first grader. The teacher forced her to learn and read the music first. This was a disaster. Eventually, there was a point when the girl was in full tears when she sat in front of the piano. Feeling sorry, my friend changed the teacher. The new teacher just played the music and let the daughter do the same. At least the fear of piano and music sheets must have subsided. The girl continued to take lessons. But it is always the teacher who chooses what to play.

I recalled all the memory of taking lessons. Not music lessons but dance and sport lessons. I never liked them. It was always teachers who told me what to do and I had to follow them blindly. The lessons never began with what I wanted to do. Reflecting on these, I became more and more willing to do things on my own.

I also thought about buying a piano and start practicing. But I couldn't go ahead with this idea either. Pianos are expensive. Even if I buy a digital piano, which is much cheaper, I wasn't sure how long I would be using it. And first of all, I was attracted to the sound of acoustic pianos. If possible, I would rather use an acoustic piano.

At around that time, I noticed the web site of *Deer Park Music Practice Studio*. The studio happens to be only five-minute-drive away from where I live. The biggest surprise was that

it is free. There are all sorts of instruments to use. Of course, I was interested in the grand piano.

I called the studio right away and made the first reservation. The studio is a converted detached garage of a house facing a fairly large park. I suspected that the studio is named after this park. I didn't see any deer at that time, though. Despite the closeness, I have never known this neighborhood.

The owner of the studio introduced himself as Sid. But I always call him Mr. Sid. He is sort of a mysterious figure. I don't know if he plays any of his instruments. I have never seen him using any of them. I don't even know if he likes music. He has never talked about music with me. I always wonder why he runs this studio.

Anyway, Mr. Sid opened the studio and I was pleasantly surprised to see a fairly large Kawai grand piano, maybe about six feet long. It looked beautiful. I was asked to tell Mr. Sid when I leave. That way, he can check the studio and close the door. Then, he left.

It was just me and the grand piano ... and a bunch of other musical instruments. Unbelievable. Right away, I downloaded the score of Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 using the computer there. I had a very basic knowledge of reading music from school days. But I was still baffled by a lot of sharps and flats as well as unfamiliar symbols. So, I just printed the first page. Using on-line resources, I started to "decode" the notes one by one. During my first reservation, I rarely touched the piano. But when I produced some notes, they sounded beautiful. So, I looked forward to the next time. I tentatively made multiple reservations for the days I could come. That's how I started to practice the piano. I have to say that I was lucky. There must be a lot of people who are sufficiently motivated but don't have access to a desired instrument.

I know that my approach to learning the piano is inappropriate and inefficient. But that doesn't matter. I can use the studio as much as I want. There is no deadline. There is nobody I want to or need to please. I just wanted to practice this one piece of music, regardless of the challenge involved in it. So, I just started. I tackled literally one note at a time. Still, I used the both hands. If I practiced left and right hands separately, I thought, I can get even more confused. I don't know how many times I repeated the first few measures. At least hundreds, maybe thousands, of times. Then, I memorized that part. Well, even a monkey might be able to do that after so many repetitions. Once I memorized that part, I was able to play faster and faster. So, eventually, this part sounded somewhat like music. And that was when I felt really good. I was playing the beginning of my favorite piano music.

After several months, I was able to memorize and play the first thirty-eight measures ... more or less. It takes about one and half minutes to play this part. Frankly, I was quite satisfied. This was my first piece of piano music. Although I could have quit at that point, I moved on.

Of course, I couldn't play like my favorite pianist. But the computer in the studio has very useful tools. For example, I can play a segment of the pianist's performance at a slower speed, without changing the pitch. This way, I can "hear" fast passages much better. Then, I can practice along with it over and over and over.

As I kept coming to the studio almost regularly, my father noticed that something was going on. I live with an aging father. He is sort of abusive ... verbally. Whenever I come home from the studio, my father says, "Where have you been, Bits? You are no good. Stay here and do your job." He always calls me Bits. Of course, that's not at all any part of my name. He just use the first part of a pejorative slang.

My father is an old-fashioned, authoritarian figure. I always wish my mother was still alive. She died two years and three months ago. I think I am a caring person. So, I take care of my father very well. But regardless of what I do, he complains. I am sick of that. I wish I could leave the house. But I'm stuck. I don't work and don't have much money. I can't even take a few days off and go on a short trip. Until last year, I had a boy friend. But he was also abusive. I had been so miserable. So, the studio became my oasis. This is the best thing that happened to me after the death of my mother.

Actually, my father is not the oldest person in my family. My maternal grandmother is still alive. She lives in a nursing home. She is almost bedridden and heavily demented. Nowadays, I am one of only a handful people she still recognizes. So, I visit her when I can. The last time, Grandma looked grumpy. I thought I would give her a wheelchair ride till the lunch time. I hoped that this would cheer her up a little. When we came to the shared area, I glanced at the old upright piano. I have never heard anyone play it. But especially after I started to practice the piano, I became curious. Of course, I had never played the piano in front of anybody. But that day, I just felt like playing that piano. So, I asked Grandma if she wanted to hear me play the piano. She nodded. I opened the fallboard. The keyboard looked all right. I played a few notes. The piano didn't sound at all like Mr. Sid's grand piano. Nevertheless, I played what I could. And it was only the first half of the whole piece, called *Lassan*, the "easier" part. I was still struggling at places; I was slow; I made mistakes. After finishing what I could, I meekly looked at Grandma. She was in tears and said, "Thank, Nora." Then, she mentioned one more word. I wasn't totally sure what she said but it sounded like "Cheer up."

After coming home, I told this to my father. He said, "Bits, you were fooling around again. Making Grandma cry? And I didn't know you can play the piano. Maybe Grandma was nostalgic. Well, her mother was a pianist from Romania ... or Bulgaria ... or Hungaria. One of those countries in the middle. I can't remember. I heard she never really played the piano after coming to this country. And that 'cheer up' thing you heard. That might be her name. I think it was something like Chiller."

With the help of the Internet, I got it. It was Csilla, one of the most common female names in Hungary. Grandma must have been trying to tell this to me. I also understood why I wanted

to play that particular piece of music so badly. I am glad that I followed my instinct. And I am eternally grateful to Mr. Sid for letting me use his studio.

Vance (trumpet):

One day, I was riding my bike with a few friends. I passed a city park. A band was playing on the platform. It was a free outdoor concert. The music wasn't my type, I thought. But the next one, I was drawn. I started to hum. Just out of curiosity, I asked one of the audience about the song. He said, "Oh, that's *Desafinado* by Tom Jobim." I didn't know any of these words. I also asked him about the instrument, "Is that a saxophone?" He answered, "Oh, yes. But it's a tenor sax."

For some reason, the music stuck with me. I even wanted to play the song *myself*. For several days, I continued to hum the song. Then, one day, I stopped by the local library. I went to the librarians' desk. I asked where I can learn how to play the saxophone. I had to add ... *for free*. The librarian looked a little surprised. But she took me to a computer and helped me to do some computer search. She typed: "where can i learn how to play the saxophone in or near Camden, New Jersey?" A bunch of results showed up. Music lessons, music teachers, and music studios. *Nothing* free. We went down several more pages. Then, she stayed on one page for a long time. It was the web page of *Deer Park Music Practice Studio*.

The librarian printed the page and handed it to me. She said, "You are a lucky guy. You got just what you wanted in a matter of a few minutes. You should be able to learn how to play saxophone there *for free*. Call this number here." I actually felt lucky. So, easy. I called the number and talked with Mr. Sid, I guess, the owner. I made the first reservation a few days after that time.

The studio was in a nearby town. It took about 20 minutes by bike. It didn't look like any kind of studio. It was just a house right next to a pretty big park. I knocked on the door and Mr. Sid came out. He took me to his detached garage. That was the studio. There were a lot of instruments. I asked for a tenor sax. Mr. Sid said, "Oh, I'm sorry. We don't have a tenor sax. We do have an alto sax. Here." I didn't know the difference. But I was a little disappointed. Actually, I was a little discouraged to see the instrument up close. There were so many keys. It looked awfully complicated. I asked Mr. Sid, "It looks complicated and difficult. But you will tell me how to play it, right?" He gave me a weird look. Then, he said, "Oh, no. I will *not* teach you anything. This is a *practice* studio. You practice *on your own*."

I almost left the place right away. But Mr. Sid continued. "You said you wanted to play a song. How much do you want to do it?" I said, "Very badly. But I don't even know where to start." Mr. Sid was calm. "OK, then. You are on." I thought, he was a crazy man. "OK, Vance. I will help you get started. But that doesn't mean that I teach you how to play a sax."

"Thank you, Mr. Sid. But what about this complicated sax? How to deal with all those

keys?" Mr. Sid was still calm. "Well, actually, I just noticed that a few keys are not in good shape. I have to bring it to a repair shop. Would you like to try a trumpet instead? There are only three buttons."

I didn't know much about the difference between the sax and the trumpet. But three buttons sounded more assuring. So, I said I would try that. Then, Mr. Sid warned me. "Of course, it's not a tenor sax. But I think you can express what you want pretty well with the trumpet too. Anyway, learning any music instrument is a challenge. It will take time. So, keep your desire to play that song and see what you can do."

Mr. Sid told me how to use the computer and the printer. He showed me a few video clips of trumpet players. They were all playing *Desafinado*. Awesome! I wanted to do that. I actually liked the sound of trumpet even more. He also showed me some more video clips. These were about how to make sounds with the trumpet. I said to Mr. Sid, "You don't teach. But these are helpful." "That's right. I'm not saying that you shouldn't use available tools. You are welcome to use the computer and find out any help you get. But you are still in charge. That's the important point. Nobody is going to tell you what to do. If you don't want to continue, that is no problem. If that happens, I guess it's not yet the time for you to practice. It may be later. Or, never. That's all right too. Do what you want."

Mr. Sid was totally different from my school teachers. All of the teachers tell me what to do. In every detail. I was pretty much fed up with that. So, Mr. Sid sounded fresh and even encouraging. I thought I would like to try at least for a while. Then, Mr. Sid helped me to find and download the music sheet of *Desafinado*. Frankly, I wasn't at all prepared to read it. Mr. Sid said, "OK. This may appear challenging. And it may well be. But you learned how to find information on the Internet. There must be a lot of web pages that could tell you how to read music. So, why don't you give it a try. Or, you may not even need to read the music. If you learn how to make all the notes, you could listen to those video clips and imitate them. Whatever works for you, that's the way. Good luck." With that, he left.

Telling the truth, I was at a loss. I tried various things. I tried to read the music. It didn't go so well. I tried to make some sounds. It didn't go so well either. Soon, my first hour in the studio was up. I went to Mr. Sid and hesitantly made the next reservation.

I could have given up already. But for some reason, I kept coming to the studio. I really wanted to play that music. But maybe, I also wanted that personal space. Escape from reality. So, I was in the studio after school, usually three times a week.

Playing the trumpet was extremely difficult for me. I kept watching some video clips and making noise. Yup, noise. After several weeks, I was able to produce several different notes. So, I was able to produce all the notes in the first two bars. Immediately after making one note, I had to stop for a breath. It was just not natural for me to do this stuff. So, often times, I was there in the studio but did nothing. I just enjoyed the space. I never had my own room.

Not just once, but quite often, I stopped coming to the studio. But missing the studio, or the space, I returned. To my surprise, sometimes, I was able to play better after a break. And I felt good when that happened. Little by little, it got better. About three or four months later, I was able to play the first four bars. By this time, it actually sounded like sort of music. That's when I got some confidence. I became more motivated and practiced more.

In a sense, I was lucky. I was free to come to the studio. Nobody in my family paid any attention. I don't know my father. My mother is supposedly "working" all the time. My sister is almost always out with some "friends" of dubious kinds. Normally, we have *something* to eat. So, I never died of hunger. But I was always hungry for some *real* food. I was always hungry for many things a poor urban boy would want.

But I grew up to be skeptical of money. The only thing my mother seems to enjoy is buying lottery tickets. She wins once in a while. Small amounts. But that makes her believe that she would win big ... some time. I don't know how much she spends on that. I wish she spent more on our foods. For me, this was a lesson. Money will not solve my family's problem. I will never buy a lottery ticket.

The studio was my oasis. But when I started the seventh bar of the music. I was stuck. I couldn't make one high note in that bar. I was so discouraged to realize that making a high pitch was so hard. I tried different ways to make sounds. I noticed that it was easier to use one side of the lips. But I then had trouble making lower sounds. With the help of the computer search, I found out that it was not the right way. So, I brought a hand mirror from home and corrected the mouthpiece position. At first, I felt I got worse. It was so hard. But after trying for several more weeks, I started to get it. I learned how to position the mouthpiece properly against my lips. And now, I am glad.

I think it was about one year after I started. I made through the end of the music. Of course, it wasn't that great. I was really slow. But I did it any way. Then, I repeated many, many times. It became smoother and smoother. Eventually, I was able to play at a normal speed. Then, I had some room to change loudness. It started to sound like music. I felt sooooo good.

When I was looking for some more hints about playing Brazilian music, I came across some interesting web sites. I was never serious about social studies before. So, I knew basically nothing about that country or any country or even my country. For the first time, I learned a lot of Brazilians are poor. I learned that they suffer just like I do. Well, I felt that many of them are suffering way more. I also learned about the injustice in Brazil. Then, I also realized that the U.S. is no different. In many ways, I felt as if I was living in a third country.

This was a turning point. Eventually, I dropped out of high school and joined a local non-profit. This organization repairs rundown houses in our neighborhood. I wasn't paid. But I got free lunch. Better than the food at home. But the work was very rough. I was like a carpenter. But the folks were really nice. None of them looked down on me. In fact, they

really valued my contribution. They didn't act like my high school teachers or my family members. They even respected me as a person. This was different. This was actually shocking. I felt as if I was a different person.

This organization happened to have a sister organization in Brazil. They do similar things there. Then, one day, I saw a poster on the bulletin board of the organization. This Brazilian sister organization was inviting a few young volunteers to visit them. I applied. To my surprise, I was accepted. It was an eye-opening trip. What we do here and there. Why do we need to do the work we do? At the end of the trip, they hosted a small party for the visitors at one of the volunteers' home. There were a lot of foods and a lot of music. Of course, Brazilian music. When they started to play *Desafinado*, I had a strong urge to play it myself. So, I asked for someone's trumpet and played. Of course, that's the only piece I could play. But they cheered and cheered. I made a lot of friends there. I promised to come back, although I had no idea how to do it. I also asked them to visit me and stay with my family, although I knew very well that there is little space in my house. But the best thing is that I now have something I look forward to. And I am eternally grateful to Mr. Sid for letting me use his studio.

Rina (violin):

My life was a mess. My father left permanently from my life. My mother suffered from depression and addiction. Then, she was declared by the court incapable of taking care of me. Since nobody else, including a small number of my relatives, stepped forward to take care of me, I was placed in a group home. It was a nice house in a nice suburban area, compared to the places I lived earlier. But living with other kids in a group home was not really the kind of experience you want to have. Often, I went to a nearby park and smoked cigarettes or consumed alcohol. Usually, I was alone. Sometimes, I was with other kids from the group home. None of us was very hopeful of our future.

In the summer a few years ago, when I was walking to the park, I occasionally heard the faint sound of a piano. Other times, I heard the faint sound of a trumpet. I realized that the sounds came from a detached garage next to one of the houses along the park. Even to my ears, it was obvious that the "musicians" were struggling. The sounds they were making were nowhere close to music. However, as time goes, I noticed that they were making a progress. I started to hear the melody. What they were trying to play were no *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. They sounded a little more serious and a lot more complex. Then, as the summer ended, there were no more sound. I guessed that they didn't open the windows.

I still saw the people come and go from that detached garage. The "pianist" was a young lady. The trumpet player looked like a high school boy. They always greet the person in the house before and after their practice. As my curiosity grew more and more, I knocked on the door of the house and asked the person what his visitors were doing. He introduced himself as "Sid." I started to call him Mr. Sid out of respect. He explained what he was

doing and very simply what his visitors were doing.

Mr. Sid asked me why I came by. "Well, I like music. There is this CD I play all the time. It was from my dysfunctional mother. By the way, I live in a group home nearby. My mother played this music when I was growing up. She played it all the time. So, it is my lullaby. I cannot get rid of it from my head. I even thought that I might learn how to play the violin and play that tune myself." Mr. Sid listened to me intently and then asked if I wanted to use his violin.

I wasn't prepared for this question. Of course, I didn't know that he had a violin. I was silent for a while. For a while, he didn't say anything either. Then, he asked if I wanted to bring the CD and listen to the music together in the garage. He said that it is a music practice studio. So, I said I would come back the following day with the CD. And I did.

Mr. Sid let me in the studio. I was quite surprised. There were so many instruments. I imagined the lady playing the piano, probably the grand piano and the boy playing the trumpet. Mr. Sid inserted my CD in the computer and played it. When it played my favorite tune, I nodded to him. He said, "All of these are beautiful music. And I can also imagine how much you associate these music with the fond memory of your mother. But this piece, *Meditation* from the Opera *Thaïs*. This is so beautiful. Do you want to play that? Here is a violin."

I have never touched a violin. The only musical instrument I had was a harmonica. But in the group home, I hesitate to play even the harmonica. I don't want to be involved in a fight. There always are fights for no apparent reasons. So, I told him that I would love to but I don't know how. He said, "Well, you should be able to find it out. Here are all the resources you need to learn. It's entirely up to you. If you want, just come here and give it a try. Luckily, you already know how to read music."

That's how it all started. He never told me what to do. It was totally up to me. I made regular reservations and came to the studio often. It's only a few minutes away from the group home. Often times, I used the space just for being myself. I didn't practice much. But gradually, I started to spend more and more time with the violin.

At first, it was challenging even to tune the violin. I had to use some on-line video clips to learn this. And when I tried to produce notes, I cursed the violin. Why don't they have frets or something to help me produce the right pitch? Unable to do this, I placed some pieces of removable tape at appropriate positions to help me. Without this, it was impossible. I secretly thought that the pianist and the trumpet player must be having a much easier time.

Unlike the usual way of learning a musical instrument, I only practiced *Meditation*. This was partly influenced by the other studio users, as I heard them play. They only play the music they want to play. No boring, repetitive exercises.

I realized that I could use different strings to produce the same note. I didn't know what to

do with that. But after finding a score that indicates the use of particular string for certain notes, I tried to use that information. Just like other studio users, I proceeded little by little. After almost a year of persistence, I made through the music. It was an extremely rough work. But I felt a sense of accomplishment never experienced before. I was pretty good academically and got many awards. For some reason, those things were not that hard. But the violin was different. There was some mysterious meaning associated with this practice.

Feeling good, I tried to improve my play. I learned how to do vibrato. This was a lot more challenging than I initially thought. But after several months of practice, I started to get it. Feeling good, I recorded my practice for the first time and listened to it over and over. Of course, it was nowhere close to the performance on the CD. However, with more practice, I became quite content. I "hear" the music all right. It is actually pleasant to hear it.

After I was separated from my father and mother, I have never met either of them. But a strange idea came up. I wanted to share my practice with my mother. I was easily able to find out where she was. Still, I didn't really have the courage to visit her. So, instead, I mailed a copy of the CD that contains my own practice.

Several weeks later, I received a letter from a stranger. She turned out to be the social worker in charge of my mother. She wrote that my mother received the CD and listened to it so many times and was in tears. My mother must have understood what it means. Then, the social worker concluded the letter with a shuttering information. My mother suddenly passed away a few days ago. The social worker regretted that she didn't contact me sooner. My mother was dead in her bed when one of the caregivers checked her in a morning. Nobody was expecting her death.

I cried. Practically speaking, my mother was gone for years by that time. Still, the fact that she is physically gone was unbearable to me. Without any other satisfying means, I continued to visit the studio to play the violin. It seems that Mr. Sid knew what had happened. But he still never told me what to do. He simply gave me the opportunity for me to grow stronger. I am eternally grateful to Mr. Sid for letting me use his studio.

Epilogue

One day, when Rina knocked on the door of Mr. Sid, there was no answer. She felt suspicious because this was the first time Mr. Sid didn't come out. She waited there for about an hour, almost to the end of her reservation time. Then, a police car drove up. She became extremely uneasy. Noticing Rina, the police officer asked her if she knew the man in the photograph on a driver's license. Rina immediately identified Mr. Sid and asked what happened to him. The police officer hesitantly told her that just a few hours ago he was killed in a car accident, instantly. Rina couldn't believe it. "Oh, no!" She was not at all prepared for this and sank to the ground.

The police office waited quietly and then consoled her. He asked if she could answer a few questions. It seemed that the officer knew almost nothing about Mr. Sid. He said there was no information about Mr. Sid's relatives or acquaintances. So, Rina told him about his music practice studio. In fact, that's all she knew about Mr. Sid. The police officer took note and also recorded Rina's contact information in case needed. Rina went home and cried in her room.

After that, the police officer went inside Mr. Sid's house, using the key retrieved from his car. As he looked through Mr. Sid's house, he noticed his will on his desk. What? It was dated the day before. The officer couldn't believe it. According to the police report, Mr. Sid was killed in a head-on collision with another vehicle. It was ruled that the other driver attempted and completed a suicide. The police report was unmistakable. The other car veered into the lane Mr. Sid was driving normally. The other driver had been suffering from depression and also left a suicide note at his house. What made Mr. Sid prepare the will the day before?

The content of the will was even more mysterious. Mr. Sid left all of his possessions, including the house, the studio, and a bank account with about half a million dollars, to the trustee of three people: Nora Lawrence, Vance Washington, and Rina Ohara. Rina? The police officer wondered why that Rina, just a user of his music practice studio be receiving Mr. Sid's inheritance?

So, the officer called Rina and told her that he needs to contact Nora and Vance as well. Rina told him that she had seen them in passing but had never talked with them. Then, Rina recalled that these two people come to the studio at relatively regular times. So, she told the police officer about the times. Both of them were supposed to come there that day. So, the police officer waited there and met them. Both Nora and Vance were shocked and cried uncontrollably. The police officer wondered what Mr. Sid meant to all these people. There was nothing to suggest that any of them were expecting this incident, much less inheritance.

Since all of the three people were very distressed, the officer refrained from telling them about the inheritance. He just collected the contact information and told them that he will get back to them later. After a few days, the police office called all of them and told them about the inheritance. He invited all of them to his police station and had a meeting.

All three were still in shock. They wanted to see Mr. Sid and didn't seem interested in the inheritance at all. Sensing their states of mind, the officer put off the discussion and asked them to hold a meeting when they are ready. About a month later, the officer called Nora, who was the only adult and asked her to arrange a meeting. The officer also let Nora have access to Mr. Sid's house and studio.

A few days later, the three got together in the studio. Everything looked the same. The grand piano, the trumpet, the violin, and everything else. All of them were still unable to process what had happened and were happening. Realizing that they didn't know one

another, they started to share their stories. Eventually, they started to discuss what to do with the inheritance. There was one point on which they all agreed. They wanted to keep the studio open, although they didn't have a clear idea about how to handle it. Vance said he wanted the trumpet. But he didn't want anything else, especially money. He said that money will only introduce more suffering to his poverty-stricken family. The other two felt sorry for Vance. Then, Vance started to mumble. He asked if he could invite a friend from Brazil. He said he promised to do that. This possibility brightened all three. Since Nora was the only adult, she offered to arrange the money for Vance.

Then, Rina asked if she could get financial support for her college expenses. Even applying for colleges costs substantial money. So, Rina applied to just one. Her application essay was based on her experience at the studio. She was accepted but even with the offered financial package, that was still way more than she could afford. So, she had never really been thinking about going to Princeton. So, Nora offered to become her legal guardian and handle the money. In addition, Nora offered to run the studio during its usual hours until a further decision is made by the three. The meeting ended there. Surely, there will be a lot more to be discussed. The three agreed to meet as needed.

The next day, the police officer received a call from Nora. She briefly explained what had happened and told him that everything will be OK. He had never experienced something like this before. Who was Mr. Sid really? He looked at his driver's license more carefully. Mr. Sid's full name was spelled: Siddhattha Gotama.